



UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

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GENERAL GOVERNMENT
DIVISION

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Dr. William H. Rumsey, Director
Department of Recreation
District of Columbia Government
Washington, D.C. 20010

Dear Dr. Rumsey:

We have completed our survey of the Department of Recreation. The objective of the survey was to gather information on the operations of the Department in order to establish a data base for future reviews.

We interviewed all division directors, collected and reviewed forms and documents used in planning, program operations and day-to-day administration. We also visited several facilities, including the North Branch of the maintenance division and the Department's warehouse and transportation center. We are suspending further work in the Department of Recreation because staff has to be diverted to other priority assignments.

Because of the broad and general nature of the survey, we do not have sufficient information to reach any firm conclusions concerning the Department's operations and activities.

Early in the survey we interviewed the maintenance director and based on our interviews and his responses, we devoted the greater portion of our time reviewing the maintenance division's operations. Our work in this division indicated a potential problem that we are bringing to your attention.

The maintenance division does not have a comprehensive master maintenance plan.

The maintenance director stated there is a need for a Master Plan, but does not have enough staff available to develop and maintain such a plan. He also stated that a preventive maintenance program is needed to enable his division to plan for and meet maintenance needs before they reach crisis proportions and become major repairs.

The division collects data and maintains work records, but it does not have an information system that will produce data on specific costs of maintenance or to serve as a guide for effectively allocating resources. The division doesn't accumulate actual salary costs for each maintenance job but allocates such costs on the basis of a flat rate of \$9.50 per hour regardless of the hourly pay rate involved. An hourly rate for equipment usage cost is computed using the original value of equipment amortized over its normal expected life. No charge is made for equipment operations cost. Materials and supplies are charged to each job based on actual use. Overhead costs, however, are not charged to jobs.

To develop a preventive maintenance program that is cost effective, an information system is needed to produce more precise and specific cost data for maintenance. Also, such data should help evaluate the maintenance program city-wide and at each facility under the Recreation Department's jurisdiction.

The Recreation Department has and is experiencing continued growth. The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) projects continued expansion in all areas. The plan calls for additional swimming pools, neighborhood centers, tennis courts, playgrounds and park areas.

Legislation is being considered by the City Council to create a Department of Parks and Recreation. Under this legislation, the Department of Parks and Recreation would assume responsibility for park lands currently under the District Department of Transportation, and the District Department of Community Development. Also, the National Park Service is considering transfer of additional Federal lands to the District Recreation Department. In addition, under the National Comprehensive Community Development Act (CD), all future housing built in the city with CD funds must have open space which will become a responsibility of the Department of Recreation if the legislation is passed creating the Department of Parks and Recreation.

With the continued and planned expansion of the Recreation Department, management will have to make timely and effective decisions on the allocation of resources to achieve maximum benefit from each maintenance dollar spent.

An Information System should generate data for budget development, setting rates, evaluating performance and determining actual cost as a part of the resource allocation process. This process should assist management to more accurately forecast monetary and related manpower needs in developing a preventive maintenance program.